

aspects of Tokugawa society into a coherent narrative centered on the *danka* system. For example, the author connects the Tokugawa attempt to eradicate Christianity with the flourishing of Buddhist temples, even though Edo never actively declared Buddhism to have any official status in society. Hur also relates the structure of the Japanese household to the *danka* system through his discussion of “creating” the ancestors through the rituals provided by the Buddhist temples. In this respect, the Japanese notions of filial piety take on special significance, and are directed not simply to one’s own parents and grandparents, as in China and Korea, but to the household in general. In another case of paradox, Hur notes that it was possible for a son to remove his father from the head of the family, an eminently un-filial act in China, if it was for the good of the household. And finally, Hur is able to tie together institutional Buddhism, as represented by the local temples that performed funerary rites and religious certification, with social and religious control by the state. It is perhaps the ultimate irony that Buddhist temples, which were not officially recognized as state institutions, should come to be such agents of state power. Hur points out that through the temple certification system, Edo came to exercise a much greater amount of control in the various domains than has been previously recognized. In the end, despite the intricate and often mind-boggling amount of detail presented in this study, Nam-lin Hur has managed to write a fascinating and far-reaching study that does not simply relate the “history” of Tokugawa period funerary Buddhism, but rather explains why (and how) Buddhism in general, and the *danka* system in particular, was of such vital importance in perpetuating Tokugawa control for more than two hundred and fifty years.

**Jonathan E. Zwicker. *Practices of the Sentimental Imagination: Melodrama, the Novel, and the Social Imaginary in Nineteenth-Century Japan***

Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2006

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During a class discussion recently a student who had been in Japan during the summer raised a ques-

tion. “Why,” he asked, “are Japanese television dramas so *sentimental*?” The disparaging tone he added to that final word led to an immediate attack by several other students—j-drama fans—who launched their own melodramatic defense of the genre. He eventually backed down, but the echoes of that exchange continue to haunt me, especially in the context of the nineteenth century.

What, from our current realism-craving culture, are we to make of all the excess, of all those swooning Victorian ladies and their resolute-yet-tearful suitors? Was it all an act, or an over-act, that somehow we, in our progressively restrained world, have (at long last) transcended? And, more to the point, what of their Japanese equivalents: those flushed, weeping maidens and their uniformed, sometimes-belligerent boyfriends?

This question is not mine alone. Peter Brooks raised it in 1976 in reference to Western literature of the nineteenth century, concluding that somehow the histrionic language of the stage found its way into the writing style of Balzac and Henry James.<sup>1</sup> More recently Ken Ito has addressed it in a late-Meiji Japanese context, seeing the flux of melodrama as a mirror reflecting the anxieties of a changing world, touchstones for real social problems that emerged in family, gender, and hierarchical relationships.<sup>2</sup> The book under review, Jonathan Zwicker’s *Practices of the Sentimental Imagination: Melodrama, the Novel, and the Social Imaginary in Nineteenth-Century Japan*, appeared two years before Professor Ito’s work, and in some respects anticipates and buttresses Ito’s conclusions even as it broaches new possibilities, including an answer to the puzzle of sentimentality in literature.

It is an impressive, eclectic work that seeks to reassess and reconfigure some of the major issues of literary modernity in Japan. Zwicker uses both close reading and broad surveys of literary success (in commercial terms) to challenge traditional notions of canon, tracing a genealogy of sentimental/melodramatic fiction across the “long nineteenth

<sup>1</sup> Peter Brooks, *The Melodramatic Imagination: Balzac, Henry James, Melodrama, and the Mode of Excess* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976).

<sup>2</sup> Ken K. Ito, *An Age of Melodrama: Family, Gender, and Social Hierarchy in the Turn-of-the-Century Japanese Novel* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008).

century” (1770s-1910s). Along the way he not only challenges the answers to old questions but also comes up with new questions of his own.

Central to Zwicker’s study is a question that haunts all scholars of early modern Japanese literature: Who, exactly, were the “anonymous” readers? One key element that has eluded scholars is a detailed description of the Reader. The author provides a portrait that is revolutionary—if cubist—in its approach and scope. Zwicker’s choice to focus on tears as a lucrative commodity offers a refreshing, multi-faceted view of both readerly expectations and market dynamics, and is one of the work’s most important contributions.

Zwicker sets up the parameters of his project in the Introduction. In response to Karatani Kōjin’s “nearness of origins” that has so captivated literary historians recently, he chooses instead to locate the novel’s origins at the beginning of the Kansei era, starting his nineteenth century from the 1770s. He notes that, during the time period from then through the 1910s, over 7000 works of fiction were published in Japan. The very magnitude of numbers, which led him to his study in the first place, challenges us to come up with a methodology that will do more than simply reinforce canon, and that involves reading broadly in neglected works as well as examining the anecdotes provided by canonical texts. His approach thus uses close readings of particular texts along with “broader, more distant, explorations of the ways in which the texts circulated and lived out their social lives” (p. 9). He also identifies another motive for his approach: to remedy the New Historicist reliance upon anecdote. “The myth that underlines anecdotal work is that an anecdote chosen almost at random can stand for an entire age” (p. 10), effacing the intractability of the historical record. He chooses, instead, “the methodologies of cultural history” to tease out the inherent textures of that record.

Chapter 1, above all, poses the big questions, in big terms, using big names. Its core is an inquiry into (and questioning of) “reigning paradigms” (p. 70) such as the history of the book and a study of literary forms (and how to bridge them), the use of the term “novel” to describe early nineteenth century Japanese fiction, and the role of literature in Japan’s emerging “community with no visible presence” (p. 63). And the author displays a deep and comfortable familiarity with both Japanese and

Western sources and thinkers who address these big questions from a dizzying variety of perspectives (Barthes, Darnton, Kenneth Burke, Jauss, Moretti, Maeda Ai, Peter Kornicki, Bakhtin, Gramsci, and Benedict Anderson, to name a few). The chapter is a *tour de force*, literally, as he focuses scholarship from diverse areas on the question at hand: How to redefine and rethink the complex, poorly understood relationship between *literary*, *historical* and *social* forces during the time from around 1770 to the 1910s. Zwicker suggests that reading the archives, rather than the authors or canons, will take us closer to that understanding, and identifies an important symbolic referent—tears—as a focal point for investigating the complex interactions between these three forces.

Chapter 2 examines the openings of the long nineteenth century and the “emergence of an aesthetic of sentiment” (p. 72) against the backdrop of a changing literary scene that includes a shift in focus from wit to plot, the birth of the culture of the novel, and the rise of the centrality of the book. Zwicker looks at bestsellers, as well as lending library data, to limn the tastes, needs, and desires of the reading public as he fleshes out both the social imaginary and the anonymous reader. He concentrates his attention on two blockbusters, Tanishi Kingyo’s *Keiseikai tora no maki* (1778) and Tamenaga Shunsui’s *Shunshoku umegoyomi* (1832/33), highlighting within each the irreconcilability of romantic love and society that forms their necessary narrative tension. In this tension he also identifies the power of tears, and suggests that their abundance in nineteenth century fiction came from the way popular novels managed to feed “the hunger for redundancy”: in providing readers with the realizations of their expectations the tearful tomes satisfied ideological needs as “commodities of imagination” (p. 120) that both filled the purses of authors and made them targets of the bakufu, who sought a monopoly on ideology.

Zwicker undertakes an “archaeology of misplaced ideas” in Chapter 3, following Maeda Ai’s injunction to look at books as *things*. Using Ōba Osamu’s recent work indexing Chinese book trade data, Zwicker demonstrates that Chinese novels were not “insignificant” at all during the long nineteenth century but had a noteworthy presence. This is true not only of the great Ming novels, but also of mass literature as well (roughly 70% of Chinese

contemporary novels apparently found their way into Japan during the nineteenth century). Beginning with *Robinson Crusoe*, an early outlier in the history of Western translation into Japanese, Zwicker interrogates the assumption that Western fiction in translation played a hegemonic role in the late nineteenth century and finds it wanting. He sees it rather as “a *basso continuo* beneath Japanese novels” (p. 152) that follows domestic swings as the century turns. He argues for archeology—studying potboilers rather than ideological heavyweights—because of the many conflicting views of literature and translation in the nineteenth century, and concludes the chapter by illuminating the bifurcated, fractured nature of the history of Western translations. Through the 1890s British and French translations dominate; thereafter the pattern diversifies by genre and geography. This, Zwicker argues, bears out the long nineteenth century view, in that the British and French translations were “an almost seamless continuation of the market in ‘foreign’ books” (p. 166) that began with Chinese *shōsetsu* in the eighteenth century. From the 1890s onward a new type of reading emerges—or, perhaps, an older, eighteenth-century mode is revived—that eschews commercial literature in favor of “art for art’s sake.” He concludes the chapter arguing that it is precisely the *literature of plot* that constitutes the dominant literature of nineteenth century Japan, one that has essentially been written out of contemporary literary histories in favor of, in Karatani Kōjin’s words, “deepened interiority and its expression” that is the mark of Western novels written in Japanese.

In Chapter 4 Zwicker engages in a close reading of two novels that signal the end of the long nineteenth century: Ozaki Kōyō’s *Konjiki yasha* and Tokutomi Roka’s *Hototogisu*. Both began as serialized tearjerkers, both relied upon melodrama, and both were wildly popular among turn-of-the-century readers, in Japan and Korea. Zwicker uses each to different ends. *Konjiki yasha*, set within the world of Meiji capitalism where even the protagonists are corrupted by money, represents the melodramatic novel in the modern, industrialist age, being “torn between the endless present of accumulation and the narrative desire or impulse to construct a past” (p. 188). Underscoring the 1890s literary tension, Kōyō’s own life is torn between the necessity of earning through publishing sentimental novels and his desire to create pure art. *Hototogisu*, on the other

hand, inscribes the notions of “beautiful death” (p. 200) and “the rhetoric of ‘too late’” (p. 201) into the world of Meiji politics with which Roka was becoming increasingly uncomfortable. “*Hototogisu* stands at the end of a series of tearjerkers that spans the long nineteenth century” (p. 202) but is part of a very different ideological moment. “Compromise and reconciliation were no longer as straightforward” as they had been throughout the nineteenth century. Zwicker concludes the chapter by identifying tears as the cathartic agent that brought the century to a close. “The tears that gripped Japan in the years around the opening of the twentieth century were a way both to acknowledge the sacrifices demanded of that idealism and to lay the idealism quietly to rest...in preparation for ‘the long journey ahead’” (p. 204).

The Epilogue is an exploration of some of the issues Zwicker has brought up in the main study. He begins with Gramsci’s notion of “cultural tendencies,” walks through the disorder of an 1891 lending library catalog, then explores the translation history of *Hototogisu* and the detailed, surprisingly cosmopolitan genealogy of *Konjiki yasha*. He then engages in a reflection upon the nature of stories, translation, and world literature, noting the worldwide commerce in sentimental novels at the turn of the nineteenth century. Benedict Anderson makes another appearance as well, when Zwicker suggests that the seemingly natural purview of a novel, the *imagined community* of a nation, easily transcends its boundaries through translation. “Nothing more clearly suggests this double life of the novel than the history of translations, which by their very nature are born of one literary tradition, only to quite literally ‘transcend’ the boundaries of the nation-state and the national language” (p. 216). He concludes the epilogue with a return to ideology, and the idea, via Freud and Althusser, that ideology is eternal. This, he argues, gives the novel its odd but universal “double life” (p. 219), and makes it imperative that we approach literary histories from both local and global perspectives.

The strengths of this work are in its daring to ask bold questions and contest assumptions. And in very many cases the author provides intriguing answers to those questions. He offers new ways to investigate the history of the novel and the book, not only in Japan but also from a global perspective. Zwicker’s masterful use of a variety of theoretical

and critical approaches is refreshing and invigorating. The overall scholarship is sound, and he cites an impressive array of sources, indicating that he has left few stones unturned in his interrogation of literary history. Aside from some small typos and several passages that tend to wax heavy in the use of critical jargon, the only fault I find with the work is its uneven focus. While arguing in the beginning for an extra-canonical, data-driven approach, Zwicker often buttresses his main arguments not with data but rather anecdotes or close readings of canonical works. And although the beginning and ending years of the long nineteenth century are well covered, the crucial period from the 1830s through the 1880s receives much less attention.

However, so many new and interesting insights are offered within the book that I think it unrealistic to expect them all to be significantly expounded upon in a single volume. I believe that the vast majority of readers, particularly those interested in the history of Japanese narrative, popular literature, and literary history, will be challenged and often satisfied by Zwicker's thought-provoking reconsideration of many central theoretical issues. The work reads well (I particularly enjoyed several turns of phrase: Tamenaga Shunsui as the "sorcerer of sentiment" comes immediately to mind), and I believe that it will amply reward those who look to understand the sentimentality that prevailed in Japanese novels during the nineteenth century.

Perhaps it will even help them better comprehend the sentimentality of contemporary Japanese television dramas!

**William E. Clarke and Wendy E. Cobcroft.**

*Tandai Shōshin Roku* Sydney: Premodern

Japanese Studies, 2009

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So much of what scholars have been able to ascertain about the life and career of Ueda Akinari 上田秋成 (1734-1809) is informed by a corpus of personal writings that he composed during the final years of his life—a substantial body of work which includes *Chaka suigen* 茶瘕醉言 (*Drunken words of a tea addict*, c.1807), *Fumihōgu* 文反古 (*Discarded letters*, 1808), and *Tandai shōshin roku* 胆大小心録 (1808). Now, for the first time in English,

readers have access to a complete, fully annotated translation of the work that is unquestionably the best source for understanding this complex figure and his views. William E. Clarke and Wendy E. Cobcroft's translation of *Tandai Shōshin Roku* fills a longstanding void in the canon of early modern Japanese literature in English translation, and affords English language readers, some of whom will come to this after text after reading Anthony Chambers's recent translation of *Ugetsu monogatari* 雨月物語 (*Tales of Moonlight and Rain*, 1776), an opportunity to learn more about one of the true "renaissance men" of early modern Japan.

To date, only a few excerpts of the work have been available in English translation, primarily through Susanna Fessler's "Nature of the Kami: Ueda Akinari and *Tandai Shōshin Roku*," which includes translations of seven sections (numbers 13 and 26-31) out of the total one hundred and sixty three.<sup>3</sup> While Fessler's article is valuable for its commentary on Akinari's views of the supernatural, its publication, nearly fifteen years ago, has long highlighted the need for a faithful translation of the entire work. After all, Akinari holds forth on a great many more topics in *Tandai shōshin roku* than foxes, badgers and ghosts; true to the genre of *zuihitsu* 随筆, his meandering brush touches upon contemporary and historical events, social customs, and perhaps most famously, his relationships with contemporaries like Moto'ori Norinaga 本居宣長 (1730-1801). Akinari keenly sensed that he was nearing the end of his life while writing *Tandai shōshin roku*, and so it is not surprising that, no longer beholden to the consequences of his statements, he should offer very candid views throughout the work, not to mention a liberal dose of vitriol. All in all, it is a rich historical and literary document, and should be of interest to anyone studying early modern Japan, not simply the work of Akinari.

Fortunately for those who have longed to include this work in their teaching curriculum, the new translation of *Tandai shōshin roku* is worth the wait. In the hands of Clarke and Cobcroft, Akinari's

<sup>3</sup> *Monumenta Nipponica* 51, no. 1 (Spring, 1996): 1-15.